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ACCOUNT

OF THE

CARE

TAKEN IN MOST

CIVILIZED NATIONS

FOR THE

RELIEF of the POOR,

MORE PARTICULARLY

In Times of SCARCITY and DISTRESS.

The SECOND EDITION,

Revised, with some ADDITIONS applicable to the Subject,
and the present Juncture.

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Æque Pauperibus prodest, Locupletibus æque. HORAT.

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P R E F A C E.

THE great Dearthness of the Necessaries of Life, and the Complaints and Disturbances arising therefrom amongst the poorer Sort of People, gave Occasion to the following ACCOUNT; the Design of which is to shew in a short, but general View, the Methods that have been used by the Lawgivers and Magistrates of old, to prevent Dearth and Oppressions; and the Manner of relieving the Subject, when such Calamities have unavoidably happened. Accordingly, herein, the Provision of *Corn* and *Bread*, the Regard had to the *Price* and *Goodness* thereof, the Regulation of *Weights* and *Measures*, with several other interesting Matters relative to the Subject in Hand, are just occasionally mentioned. Facts only are recited: The Reflections and Uses to be made therefrom, are left to the superior Discernment of the learned and judicious Reader.

And

And the End of the following Pages will be fully answered, if in them any Hint or Example should occur, that may excite more extensive Sentiments of Benevolence and Humanity ; or tend to produce any Sort of Method for the speedier Relief of the *Poor*, from the Hand of the *Extortioner* and *Oppressor*.

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A C C O U N T
O F T H E
C A R E
T A K E N O F T H E
P O O R, &c.

N
I N every wise and well established Commonwealth, from the earliest Ages of the World down to the present Times, the Consideration of that important Article BREAD, *the Staff of Life, and the Strengtbener of Man's Heart*, has been duly attended to by the Legislature.—The Regulation likewise of *Weights and Measures* at all times, but more especially in a Season of *Dearth* and *Scarceness*, has been thought a Matter of the utmost Consequence and Concern: By such a prudent and impartial Admini-
B stration

stration of Justice, the Rapacity and fraudulent Designs of the Wicked and Covetous are restrained and defeated ; and the Wants and Hunger of the Poor are supplied in the pinching Years of Dearness and Necessity ; and a due Care and Provision of this Kind comes recommended to the Governors and Magistrates of a Nation, not only from the religious Duties of Charity and Humanity, but even from the truest Principles of Policy and Government ! For as the inferior Sort, especially the Manufacturer, the Mechanic, and Labourer, constitute the greatest Part of a Community, and by their Diligence and Industry in their Business, contribute most to the Strength and Opulency thereof, whatever Nation takes the best Methods to support them, uses the best Means to support itself.

Account from the J E W I S H
T H E O C R A C Y.

IN the *Jewish Commonwealth* the greatest Care was taken, and the most positive Commands given, enforced by the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments, with Regard to
the

the afore-mentioned Particulars. That the (1) Mosaical Account (says an accurate Enquirer) is the most antient History in the World, and he the most antient Legislator, known to us by History, or Tradition, is allowed by the most learned Chronologers, both of our own and other Nations, which may be seen by the Chronological Tables of the most learned Men in Europe. The Jewish Commonwealth (says another) is justly looked upon as a Model of Government of divine Original; it will deserve therefore our Attention, as much sure, as any of the Forms of Government in the antient Times, either among the Egyptians, Greeks, or Romans. It should more especially deserve our Attention as Christians, who own the Laws delivered by Moses to the Hebrew Nation, to have been delivered by the Oracle of God, and established by Authority of the supreme Governor of the World; in which therefore we may expect to find a wise and excellent Model, becoming the Wisdom of such a Lawgiver.

B 2

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(1) See Berington's Dissertations, and Lowman on the Jewish Polity; Prideaux Connect. Josephus, &c. &c.

A particular Portion of Corn - Tythe was given to the Poor, as well as to the Priest and Levite, as mentioned in the Book of (1) Deuteronomy, and which is likewise again mentioned and alluded to in several other Passages of Scripture (2).

And besides this extraordinary Provision there were three or four Things in their yearly Harvest allotted to the Poor; viz. a (3) *Nook or Corner of the Field, the forgotten Sheaf, the Gleanings, and single or fallen Grapes, and ungathered Olives.*

Money likewise was commanded by the Mosaic Institutes to be lent to the Poor without Usury, or taking of any Kind of Interest, especially in the Times of Need, Scarcity, and Distress (4).

That the Community may not be wronged in Weight or Measure, the following Commands

(1) Deut. xiv. 28. 29, and xxvi. 12,

(2) Neh. xiii. 10. Mal. iii. 8.

(3) Lev. xix. 9, 10.

(4) Exod. xxii. 25 Levit. xxv. 35. Deut. xv. 78.

mands are strictly enjoined. “ Ye shall do no Unrighteousness in Judgment, in Meteyard, in Weight, or in Measure. Thou shalt not have in thy House divers Measures, a great and a small. Just Balances, just Weights shall ye have, that thy Days may be lengthened in the Land.—All that do unrighteously are an Abomination to the Lord.” (1)

All Frauds and Abuses herein, and with Regard to the above-mentioned Allotments to the Poor, were cognizable by the *Sanhedrim*.

In the Times of the Kings of *Israel*, it was the Custom to lay up Bread, Corn, and other Necessaries, for the Sustenance of Man's Life, in Store-houses ; (2) and these were built

(1) Levit. xix. 36, 37.

(2) 1 Chron. xxvii. 25. As the Jewish Constitution, (says Lowman) put a Bar to great Riches, and made such Provision for the natural Conveniences of Life, that very few could be in great Want of Poverty : This served to diminish greatly the Temptations of Luxury, Pride and Envy ; nor were there any so necessitous as to seek Relief for their private Wants and Misery, in the public Confusion and Disorders of their Country. How much do these Provisions of the Hebrew Government, to prevent the

built in Fields, Towns, Castles, &c. as Conveniences suited, or the Exigences of the Times required. *David*, when he made the necessary Disposition of Officers over the several Departments and Revenues of his Kingdom, did not forget to appoint one over the *Store-houses* in the Fields, in the "Cities, and in the Villages, and in the Castles." Thus while he took Care (to use his own Words) *that his Garners were full, affording all Manner of Store*, by the Blessing of God attending his Precaution, *He abundantly blessed his Subjects with Provisions, and satisfied the Poor with Bread.* And if, upon no other Account, yet for his compassionate Regard for the Poor alone, the Royal Prophet had merited the honourable Appellation of *the Man after God's own Heart*, who is Benevolence and Goodness itself, and who in Scripture delighteth to be called the peculiar Friend and Patron of the Needy and Distressed,

Solomon, his Son, in whose Writings is contained a most excellent System of *Ethics*,
Politics,

the Occasion of Faction, excel all the Constitutions of the famed Spartan Lawgiver for the same Purpose, so much celebrated by the ancient Grecian Authors,

Politics, and Oeconomics, and who as a righteous Prince, and wise Magistrate, considered the Cause of the Poor, built many (1) Store-Cities amidst the other magnificent Buildings in his Dominions, whose Example herein was afterwards followed by those two other good Kings, Jehosaphat, and Hezekiah.

Nor was his Care and Vigilance in rectifying false Weights and Measures less remarkable, as appears from that bitter Exclamation against them, Prov. xi. 1. "A false Balance is an Abomination to the Lord, but a just Weight is his Delight;" which he again repeats Prov. xx. 23. "Divers Weights are an Abomination to the Lord; and a false Balance is not good."

As we have now seen that a proper Provision of Bread for the Poor, and a due Regulation of Weights and Measures was one great Support of the Jewish Policy, so we may observe, that a Neglect of these important

(1) 2 Chron. viii. 4. 1 Kings ix. 17, 18, 19. 2 Chron. xvii. 12. 2 Chron xxxii. 27, 28. Tadmor, probably one of Solomon's Store Cities, was the celebrated Palmyra, so named by the Greeks.

tant Articles was one of the woeful Causes of the final Ruin and Destruction of that once flourishing People and Nation. And to wave a multiplicity of Proofs, which might be produced both from sacred and profane History, in verifying this Assertion, I shall only quote that very remarkable one in the Prophet Amos, viii. 3. &c.

“ Hear this, O ye that swallow up the
 “ Needy, even to make the *Poor* of the Lord
 “ to faint ; saying, When will the (1) *New-*
 “ *Moon* be gone, that we may sell Corn ?
 “ and the *Sabbath*, that we may set forth
 “ Wheat ? making the (2) *Ephah* small, and
 “ the *Shekel* great, and satisfying the Ba-
 “ lances by Deceit ? That we may (3) buy
 “ the *Poor* for Silver, and the (4) *Needy for a*
 “ *Pair of Shoes* ; yea, and sell the refuse of
 “ the

(1) *New-Moon-Sabbath*. The Jews by their Laws were prohibited from selling any Thing on the first Day of the Month ; on the Sabbaths and Holidays.

(2) *Ephah, Shekel*. These Extortioners bought by the latter, and sold by the former.

(3) *Buy the Poor for Money*. That is, by Oppression force them to give up themselves for Servants, when they could not pay, *vide Levit. xxv. 33, 40. and 2 Kings iv. 1.*

(4) *The Needy for a Pair of Shoes*. A proverbial Expression.

“ the Wheat ? The Lord hath sworn by the
 “ Excellency of Jacob, surely I will never
 “ forget any of their Works. Shall not the
 “ Land tremble for this, and every one
 “ mourn, that dwelleth therein ? and it shall
 “ rise up wholly as a Flood ; and it shall be
 “ cast out and drowned, as by the Flood of
 “ Ægypt,” &c.

Account from CHURCH
 HISTORY.

ST. PAUL, in one of his Epistles to the
 Corinthians, explains the Manner of col-
 lecting Alms in the Assemblies of the primi-
 tive Christians. This Practice they had bor-
 rowed from the Jewish Synagogues, where it
 still obtains.

In the first Ages of the CHURCH, the
Bishop had the immediate Charge of all
 the Poor, both sound and diseased, as also of
 Widows, Orphans, Strangers, &c. When
 the Churches had fixed Revenues allotted to
 them, it was decreed, that at least one fourth
 Part thereof should go to the Relief of the
 Poor ; and to provide for them the more

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commodiously, divers Houses of Charity were built, which are since denominated (1) *Hospitals*, at first popularly called *Spittals*. They were governed wholly by the Priests and Deacons, under the Inspection of the Bishop.

In Course of Time seperate Revenues were assigned for the Hospitals ; and particular Persons, from Motives of Piety and Charity, gave Lands and Money for erecting Hospitals.

Julian the Apostate, observing the Excellency and public Utility of these charitable Foundations, writes thus to *Arsacius*, the High-Priest of *Galatia*.

“ Ξενοδοχεια καὶ ἐκαστην πόλιν κατασκευασον πυκνα &c. (2)

“ ’Tis my Will and Pleasure that you
 “ institute several *Hospitals* in every City ;
 “ that not only Strangers of our own Religion,
 “ but of other Sectaries likewise
 “ dissenting from us, who are in Want and
 “ Necessity, may partake of our Bounty and
 “ Humanity

(1) See Chambers Dictionary under the Word Hospital.

(2) Julian Imp. Oper. Par. secund,

“ Humanity. I have already ordered you
 “ the necessaries Supplies for such good Pur-
 “ poses.—If you take Notice, there is not a
 “ Beggar to be seen amongst the Jews, and
 “ even the wicked (1) *Galileans* maintain
 “ not only their own Poor, but many of ours
 “ also; and this will be a shameful Re-
 “ flection upon us *Gentiles*, if *our* Poor are
 “ suffered to remain in Necessity, destitute of
 “ the Assistance and Protection we ought to
 “ afford them.”

When the Church Discipline began to relax, these Foundations were abused, but were rectified by the Council of *Vienne*; and afterwards the Proceedings of this Council relative hereto were confirmed by the Council of *Trent*.

Account from the EGYPTIAN STATE.

UPON a slight Search into the History of the EGYPTIANS, we shall be informed by (2) *Herodotus* and *Xenophon*
 “ That

(1) The Heathens thus called the primitive Christians by Way of Contempt.

(2) Herod. Euterpe. Xenoph. Anab. lib. 4.

“ That *Osiris* was the first amongst them,
 “ that found out Food fit and convenient
 “ for Man’s Body. And that, where Vines
 “ would not grow, and be fruitful, he taught
 “ the Inhabitants to make Drink of Barley,
 “ little Inferior in Strength and pleasant Fla-
 “ vour to Wine itself. For which Benefit
 “ he was esteemed by all worthy of divine
 “ Honours.” And *Plutarch* tells us, that
Osiris, when he was King of Egypt, drew
 them off from a beggarly and bestial Way of
 Living, by shewing them the Use of Grain,
 and by making for them Laws, and teaching
 them to Honour the Gods. *Osiris* was re-
 presented, says (1) *Plutarch*, by an Eye and
 Sceptre.—A very proper and expressive Em-
 blem this of the Duty and Majesty of every
 King, who ought to employ both his Fore-
 cast and Power for the Safety and Welfare
 of his People.

The *Egyptians* early improved and culti-
 vated these Discoveries and Advantages: For,
 by a proper Culture of their Land, the Ad-
 vantage of the River *Nile*, and a due Care of
 the Grain at Seeds-Time, in the Blade, ear-
 ing,

(1) *Plutarch* Is. and *Osir*,

ing, reaping, threshing, and laying up in Storehouses, Egypt soon became the best Mart for Corn, as well as Science, in the known World; and from hence were continually imported, as well Arts and Polity, to civilize Man in the Lands of Barbarism and Ignorance; as also Food to sustain him in the Times of Famine and Distress.

Some of the Learned have imagined, (1) the *Pyramids* were originally designed for Granaries; indeed their real intended use seems not to be quite certainly known: however that be, an Historian of great Credibility informs us what Care and Notice was taken of the inferior People in that Nation. Husbandmen, Shepherds, and Artificers, says he, formed the three Classes of lower Life in *Ægypt*, but were nevertheless had in very great Esteem, particularly Husbandmen and Shepherds. The Body Politic requires a Superiority and Subordination of its several Members; for as in the (2) natural Body the Eye may be said to hold the first Rank, yet its Lustre does not dart Contempt upon the Feet, the Hands

(1) 1 Diod. lib. 1. p. 67, 68.

(2) See St. Paul's Epist. 1 Cor. c. xii.

Hands, or even those Parts, which are less honourable. In like Manner, amongst the *Ægyptians*, the Priests, Soldiers, and Scholars, were distinguished with particular Honours; but all Professions, to the meanest, had their Share in the public Esteem; because the despising any Man, whose Labours, however mean, were useful to the State, was thought a Crime (1)

The *Ægyptian* Weights and Measures were adjusted by their first King MIZRAIM. Such was this excellent Constitution. And that none but the Deserving and Industrious amongst the lower Rank should meet with the public Encouragement, and that every Man might be made useful to the State, he was obliged to enter his Name, and Place of Abode, in a public Register, that remained in the Hand of the Magistrate, and to annex his Profession, and in what Manner he lived. If such a one gave a false Account of himself, he was immediately put to Death.

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(1) See Rollin's Hist. Vol. 1. p. 52.

ACCOUNT *from the* GRECIAN POLITY.

IF we look into the *Grecian History*, we may find amongst the earliest Accounts of that Nation, that *Ceres*, a Woman of *Sicily*, about the Year of the World 1030, (according to Sir (1) *Isaac Newton*) comes into *Attica*, and there teaches the Greeks to sow Corn ; for which Benefaction she was Deified after Death. She first taught the Art to *Triptolemus*, the young Son of *Celeus*, King of *Eleusis*. Agreeable to this Fact, (2) *Pliny* tells us, that *Ceres* was the first that shewed the Way of sowing Corn. Whereas before-time Men lived on Mast. She taught also, how to grind Corn, to knead Dough, and make Bread thereof, in the Land of *Attica*, *Sicily*, and *Italy* ; for which benefit to Mankind she was reputed a Goddess.

And, if from the first Rising of the Athenian State we bend our Eyes forward to its
meridian

(1) *Newton's Chron.* p. 15.

(2) *Pliny* l. 7. c. 56.

meridian Strength and Grandeur, we shall see, that the Consideration of *Bread-Corn*, and other necessary Provisions for the People, was still duly attended to by the Legislature.

Solon, we are told, was the first who regulated their *Weights and Measures*.

Amongst the Magistrates there were the (1) *Overseers of Corn* (Σιτοφυλάκες) fifteen in Number. Their Business was to take Care that Corn and Meal should not be sold at too dear a Price, and to appoint the Affize of Bread.—There were others whose Office was to see that the Measures of Corn were just and equal; others were likewise appointed to take Care that no Man wronged, nor in any Way circumvented another in Buying and Selling,

And such blessed Consequences attended the Care, Vigilance, and Activity of the Magistracy (as one of their most celebrated Orators tells us) that no Citizen of *Athens*, in those Times, ever died of Hunger, nor ever did a Beggar (2) dishonour their Streets.

(1) See Potters's Greek Antiq. Vol. 1. p. 53.

(2) Is. Orat. Areop. p. 369.

ACCOUNT *from the* ROMAN STATE.

THE Roman State in its marvellous Rise, its flourishing Progress, and its exemplary Fall, has often been compared to the *Jewish* Theocracy. And, indeed, therein we may observe a remarkable Parity of Circumstances with regard to the Provisions of Bread-Corn, &c. and the Regulation of Weights and Measures.

In the *Roman* State, as in the *Jewish*, we find proper Officers appointed for these important Places of Trust.

The Commons, by the Permission of the Senate, chose yearly out of their own Body the *Plebeian Ædiles*, who, amongst other matters, were to have the Care of rectifying the Weights and Measures.—In the Philosophical Transactions, No. 442, there is an Account (1) of the Standard Measures preserved in the Capitol of *Rome*.

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(1) By Martin Folkes, Esq. late President of the Royal Society.

We are informed likewise by the most credible Writers of the *Roman* Government, and the Affairs relating thereto, that the storing up and distributing of Corn, especially amongst the poorer Sort, was made in early Times by the Senate, and afterwards established by Law, and became Part of the Constitution. (1)

Julius Cæsar created the *Corn-Prætors*, and *Corn-Ædiles* (2) to inspect the public Granaries (in different Parts of the City) and other Provisions, to supervise all the Commodities exposed in the Markets, and to punish Delinquents in all Matters concerning buying and selling. And besides these ordinary Officers, there was an extraordinary one chosen in Time of Difficulty and Dearth, called the (3) *Corn-Præfect*; and he was for that

(1) Principio Senatus, et Magistratum Arbitrio frumentum datum est levissimo pretio largitio deinde sancita est legibus, quarum postrema gratis primum dedit. Hæc arrisit Imperatoribus, et habita inter Imperii fundamenta, diurno tandem pane mutata est.

Vincentii cont. de Frument. Roman Largit. c. 1.

(2) Dio. lib. 44. Godwin and Kennet, &c.

(3) Quoniam de potestatibus agitur, ratio etiam admonet, ut de præfecto Annonæ extra ordinem tunc creari solito, non nihil adjiciam. Hujus Magistratus.

that Time invested with larger Authority than those ordinary Clerks of the Market. He was to see that Bread-Corn was bought up from all Places; and if any had more than would serve their own Uses, he was to order all Hoarders to bring it out, and to sell it at a just and reasonable Price. By the Assistances of this Magistrate the People of *Rome*, in Time of Dearth and Scarcity, did often receive very great Benefit. He had Power of himself to examine all such Cases or Questions as should arise touching the instant Dearth, as suppose the Hoarding of Corn, forestalling the Market, &c.

(1) The Distributions of Corn were made uncertainly, as the Badness of the Times and the Necessities of the Poor required.

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gistratus difficili tempore, et caritate Annonæ, usus potissimum atque opera exigebatur. Frumentum undique coemendum; et si quis ultra proprios usus possideret, in medium ponendum curabat, advehi undique et adductum justo pretio vœnire nitebatur. Cujus ope magistratus egregia Populo Romano, penuria laboranti, sæpe opera navata est. L. Feneftella de Magistrat. Rom & Rosin. Ant. L. 7. c. 28.

(1) Frumentatio vetus Romæ, et ipso etiam Senatu. Ille in Rebus et Annonæ arcta quasi benignus

- Sometimes they were made annually, monthly, or daily, upon very great extremities, when the most deserving and most indigent received it for nothing, or for an under Price.(1)

And that the People might receive their allotted Proportion, and that strict Justice might be done to all, there were four Officers appointed by AUGUSTUS for this Purpose, Men of good Repute, and approved Honesty. To these Officers the People delivered a (2)*Tessera*, or Victualling-Ticket, which was given them to be produced on every Day of Distribution; and when they were enabled to subsist without the Public Charity, they might transfer their Ticket to another, who wanted it.

And besides these ordinary Donations, there were frequently extraordinary Presents of Corn given to the People, and the Soldiery

nus Pater, miseritus Plebis, frumentum aliquando divisit, non tamen nullo, sed modico ære.

Frumentum quoque in Annonæ difficultatibus sæpe levissimo, interdum nullo pretio, viritim ademptus est. Sueton. in Vit. Cæsar Aug. c. 41.

(1) Godwyn Antiq. Rom c. 2. p. 222. of Corn-Laws.

diery upon particular Days of Festivity, Triumphs, and Ovations.

The Number of People, (3) to whom Portions of Corn were given was amazing, nor was the Quantity at some particular Seasons less surprizing. And no one, however infamous, if a Roman Citizen, was excluded: Nor are these Accounts we meet with in their Historians incredible, when we consider the vast Wealth of the Romans: and that their public Funds were chiefly supplied from the many *Corn-Provinces* that were conquered, and made tributary thereto, especially *Ægypt*, *Sicily*, and *Africa*.

The pernicious Consequences of *Engrossing*, *Forestalling*, and *Regrating* of Corn,
may

(2) Qui *Tesseras* habebat ad curatores frumenti ibat, munus institutum ab Augusto: Quatuor-Viri enim erant, ubiq; ex honestioribus, et qui ante quinquennium Prætura functi essent. Lipsius.

3 Quis tamen Numerus accipientium fuit reperio aliquando ad trecenta viginti millia cepisse. Tot illi Romæ Pauperes? Pauperes, aut saltem qui sublevari gauderent: inter quos Liberti, et id genus, maxime fuere. Seneca, tenuiores omnes cives. Frumentum, inquit, publicum tam Fur, quam perjurus et Adulter accipiunt, et sine discrimine Morum, quiquis civis est. Lips. de Mag. Rom. lib. c. 10.

may be supposed to be sufficiently provided against by the incorporated Society of Merchants, as that Society was under the Government and Direction of a Magistrate, and all public Corn-Ships were invested with particular Privileges and Immunities.

Plutarch supposes this Society to have been established by *Numa*: Florus and Orosius say it was instituted by Servius Tullius; and Dr. Arbuthnot places its Foundation in the Year of Rome 259. (1) It had an Inspector like the French "Provôt de Marchands." The Merchants met at the Temple of Mercury, like our Change. They were exempted from municipal Offices; and raised also to the Dignity of Knights by Constantine, &c.

Julius Cæsar and *Augustus* were remarkably careful of the Public Stores, and constant Distribution of them in the Manner described, and the like Care was taken by most of the succeeding *Emperors*, for this Matter (tho', as all others, sometimes abused) was considered as the chief Support of the Empire.

More

(1) Vid. Arbuthnot's Navigation of the Antients, et Tacit. lib. 12.

More particularly was the Emperor *Claudius* solicitous in this Respect: to this End he secured the Corn-Merchants from Pirates by Sea, and finished the Port of *Ostia*, and made at an immense Labour and Expence that celebrated Aqueduct, thro' great Mountains, and over stupendous Arches in Vallies, by which *Rome*, from a Source at forty Miles distant, was supplied with Water, called the *Claudian* Water. In his Reign came to pass that extraordinary Famine which was foretold by the Prophet *Agabus*, (1) mentioned in the New Testament, Acts xi. 27, 28, when the Christians at *Antioch* sent some Collection to their suffering Brethren in *Judea*, by the Hands of *Barnabas* and *Saul*.

Domitian! (a Word like *Nero*, at the Sound of which Humanity shudders) how can your infamous Wish be mentioned, or passed by in Silence? "*Ob! for a Plague! a Famine!*—for what? to make your Reign known

(1) The Reality of this Famine, and the Greatness of it, is attested by *Dion. Cassius*, *Josephus*, and *Suetonius*.

At what Time *Claudius* was in *Britain*, and what he did there, is well known to every Reader of English History.

known to Posterity! Execrable Wretch! your Wish, as to its Purport, has been fulfilled: The Cruelty and Impiety of it has consigned a *Domitian* to everlasting Remembrance, Detestation, and Shame.

But *Trajan* relieves our Thoughts, and reconciles us again to the Name of Roman Emperor, *Trajan* in whom were concentrated most of the Virtues that adorn a Prince and a Man; *Trajan* made the Empire greater and happier than any of his Predecessors. Amongst the many eminent Works he did for the Public Good, must be mentioned his very great Attention to the Public Stores, and in particular to the grand and most necessary Article of Life, BREAD. To prevent the Extortions and Frauds committed in the making and selling it, this good Emperor instituted a (1) COLLEGE, or a Corporate Society of Bakers; and their Bake-Houses in different Parts of the City were superintended and regulated by proper Officers appointed for that Purpose.

Severus

(1) Ut Panis ingenti Urbem colentium multitudini abunde suppeditaret, nec deficeret unquam, repertum a Trajano firmatumque Pistorum Collegium.
Qua

Severus, after many signal Conquests in *Parthia*, *Persia*, and *Arabia*, came at last into *Britain* to deliver the Northern Inhabitants thereof from the frequent Incursions and Oppressions of the *Scots* and *Picts*, which *Spartian* reckons the chiefest Glory of his Reign; but surely his leaving at his Death seven Years Provision of Corn for the Roman People ought to be no less recorded to his immortal Honour. (1)

Aurelian, though he had driven out all the barbarous Enemies from the Roman Empire; tho' Fortune had crowned his Arms with Victory in various Parts of the World; tho' he had taken the Imperial City of *Palmyra*,
E and

Qua Ratione et Populo R. universo et peregrinis optimus Imperator prospexit, quorum plerique pane a propola vitam tolerabant.

The great Care and Humanity of *Trajan* to the Roman People is thus related by *Pliny*—*Instar ego perpetui Congiarii reor Affluentiam Annone. Emit fiscus quicquid videtur emere: inde Copiæ, inde Anrona, de qua inter licentem vendentemque conveniat, inde hic Satietas, nec Fames usquam.*—A Loaf, made in this Emperor's Reign, is still preserved entire as it was found in the subterraneous Ruins of the City of *Herculaneum*; and now shewed as a Curiosity among the other Antiquities found in that Repository. It has a consular Stamp upon it.

(1) See *Drake's Hist. and Antiq. of York*, where *Severus* died.

and the famous Eastern (1) QUEEN to grace his splendid Triumph ; yet, more than all his Conquests, more than all the Services he had done to *Rome*, did he value the Addition he had made to the Plenty and Cheapness of the necessary Provisions of Life. (2)

And in this Respect, next to his Conversion to *Christianity*, is the Reign of CONSTANTINE particularly distinguished ; and herein no Doubt he was more strongly influenced by the Principles of that pure Religion he had embraced, and whose excellent Doctrine is one of the greatest Proofs of its divine Original (3).

In the Time of CONSTANTINE, Victuals consisted chiefly of Corn, Bread, Oil, Pork, Fish, Salt, &c ; with these (by the Assistance of proper Officers) the public Store-Houses were stock'd, the Markets well supplied, and the Weight and Goodness of the Commodities

(1) Zenobia.

(2) Inter cætera quibus, Diis faventibus, Romanam rem juvimus, mihi nihil est magnificentius, quam quod additamento unciae omne Annonarum urbicarum genus juvi. Flavius Vospicus in Rom. Imperat. Histor.

(3) See John xvii. 16. 17.

ties examined, and there sold at reasonable Prices, and still more cheaply, or given to the inferior Class, and very poor People, as Times and Occasions required. And this Police was equally established in all the municipal Cities throughout the Roman Provinces. The whole of these Particulars may be seen amongst other Authors, in *Pancirollus*, and the *Theodosian Code*. (1)

It might just be mentioned here, that money too was sometimes given to the People, as well as Corn and Bread, &c. as appears by some of the Writers of the *Roman Antiquities*; and that at *Rome* there were Officers called the (2) *Triumviri Minarii*, and *Mensarii* Sort of Bankers, who had Authority to pay out of the common Treasury

E 2

poor

(1) *Pancirollus* in notitiam Imp. Orient. de Præfec. Annonæ cap. 26. et de Magistratibus Municipalibus cap. 12. de curatoribus Annonæ. C. Theod. de Annona et in Form. de Prefect. Ann. Cassiodor.

(2) *Alex. Gen. Dier.* lib. 1. c. 16. and *Godwyn's Rom. Antiq.* *Lipsius* says, the Soldiers were paid in Victuals, not in Money, which if they had always received they might have applied to wrong and bad purposes. Bonum et utile institutum, militi semper victum esse, nec inopia cogi ad rapiendum, aut deferendum. Si pecunia in hunc usum, potuisset ire in alium usum, igitur maluerant rem dare ipsam. *Lipsius* de Milit. Rom. l. 4. Dial. 16.

poor Men's Debts.—The State, no Doubt, judging it better to do so, than to lose the Benefit of their Services by Imprisonment.

Yet after all the Care and Prudence of the wisest Government, Dearth and Famine will sometimes unavoidably happen; and we read of several formidable (1) Insurrections amongst the *Roman* People in those dreadful Times of Calamity and Distress. But how were these formidable Insurrections quelled? They were, for the most Part, timely and prudently appeased by the vigilant Care and Activity of the Magistracy, and the Emperors, who were not so much affronted and exasperated by these Commotions, as admonished, and excited to procure, if possible, immediate Relief, and provide against such disastrous Circumstances for the future (2). And for such godlike Benefactions

(1) Suet. in vit. Claud Cæsar. Tacit. Ann. l. 12. 43. Aurel. Viët. in Vit. Antonini pij.

(2) Quibus seditionibus admoniti Imperatores muneris sui, rei frumentariæ studiosissime prospexerunt. Testes Nummi Veteres quorum multi exstant cum hâc inscriptione, *Annona Augusta.* id est Imperatore curante copiose Urbi illata. Vinc. Cont. de frument. Rom. Largit.

tions and Providences, Medals, yet extant, were often struck, with this Inscription. (1)

ANNOA AUGVSTA.

Public Honours likewise were given to the (2) Magistrates, who had behaved properly in their Office, and thus deserved well of their Country in calamitous and necessitous Times.

Nor should the Honour be forgotten here, which some *Romans* had of naming their Families from their Inventions of public Utility. Hence the *Pilumni*, who devised first

(1) See the Medal *Annona* in *Spence's Polemetis* Plate 22. and the Account of it in P. 148.

"*Annona* has Corn in her Hand, and the Beak of a Ship by her to shew some temporary supply of Corn, which was probably brought by Sea to Rome, by the Emperor's Order, when they were in great Want of it. The Figure of her here was borrowed from the Reverse of a Medal struck in Honour of that good Emperor *Antoninus pius*".—A saying of *Scipio's*, which he often used, is as much to his Honour, as the Medal, 'I had rather preserve one Citizen than kill a thousand Enemies.' He wrote a Treatise in 12 Books containing the Duty of a good Prince.

(2) P. *Minutius* & *Trebius* had brass Statues for these Reasons. *Plin.* l. 34. c. 5. & l. 18. c. 3.

first the Pestle to bray Corn withal in their (1) Mills and Bake-Houses. Hence likewise the *Pisones*, who took their Name *a Pisendo*, from pounding Corn in a Mortar.

—*Inventas qui Vitam excoluere per Artes,
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.*

This Account of the *Roman Constitution*, in Favour of the Poor, may not improperly be concluded with observing, that though such great Care was taken therein for the inferior Sort, yet as great Care likewise was taken, that no Man should receive those Bounties undeservedly, or be a Burden to the State by eating the Bread of Idleness. For the *Censors* of *Rome*, by their Office, had Command and Authority given them to enquire into, and reform the Life and Manners of the People; and if any had been an ill Husband, and neglected his Farm, or left his Vine untrimmed, or was
idle

(1) It is most ardently to be wished, that some Sort of Corn Hand-mills were invented and made for grinding of Corn and Malt, and placed in every Parish, for the Sake of the poorer Sort *gratis*, who are now too often sorely cheated by the exorbitant Tolls, and other base Tricks of the Miller.

idle in his Station and Calling, the *Censors* took Cognizance of it, and the Offender was punished accordingly. (1)

We might just take a flight Survey of other Kingdoms now flourishing upon Earth, even our (2) Enemies, and see how their Polity stands with regard to what has been already treated on; but as most Nations have borrowed the most excellent Parts of their Constitution from the *Ægyptian, Grecian,* and *Roman* States, and as that would swell this Treatise far beyond its intended Size, it may now be ended with some

ACCOUNT *from our own* GOVERNMENT.

BEFORE the Dissolution of *Religious Houses* in this Kingdom, the Poor were in Part maintained by the charitable Relief of

(1) See Godwyn's Rom. Antiq.

(2) The *French* buy up Plenty of Grain when cheap, to sell to the *Poor*, when dear, at the ordinary Prices. Postlethwayte on the French Trade and Navigation.

The same Author in his Britain's Commercial Interest, has drawn a Plan for public *Granaries*, in *England*, &c. to prevent a Dearth of Corn, and lower the Price of Victuals, and Labour of Trade, and Manufacturies.

of Abbies, Nunneries, Priories, and Monasteries. In *part* maintained only, for that they were *wholly* fed by them cannot be proved. It has indeed been generally thought so, and this Notion has so long prevailed, from Inattention to a Fact, which, whether false or true, few at this Distance of Time think worth their Consideration.

But as some hard Reflections were thrown upon the Reformation, on Account of the Increase and Neglect of the Poor, who before, as it is pretended, were so well provided for by these Religious Houses, it may not be thought improper here by a few brief Remarks, to vindicate our Church and State from such a groundless Aspersion.

Whoever considers some of the Statutes in the Reigns of (1) Edward III. Richard II. and Henry V. and VII. must allow that there was as much Occasion for provisionary Laws, relating to the Poor, before the Reformation, as after. If we likewise take in the antient Hospitality of the British Nobility and

(1) 23 Edw. III. c. 7. 12 Rich. II. c. 7. 2 Hen. V. c. 1. 19 Hen. VIII. c. 12.

and Gentry, and the many charitable Foundations of this Realm, erected of old by the Laity, how could the Monasteries ever claim the Merit of supporting the whole poor of the Nation at their Gates ?

In the Reign of Henry the Eighth, when Monasteries were in their most flourishing State and Condition, we find a very remarkable Increase of the Poor, as abundantly appears from the Preamble of an Act of the 22d of Henry VIII. c. 12.

In the Preamble of another Act of the 25th of Henry VIII. c. 13. it is recited, that divers covetous Persons, among whom (1) Sir *Thomas More* reckoned the rich Abbots, espying the great Profit of Sheep, have gotten into their Hands great Portions of the Grounds of this realm, converting them to Pasture from Tillage, and keep some 10,000, some 20,000 some 24,000 Sheep, whereby the Prices of Cattle and Victuals are increased almost double above the Prices which have been accustomed, and the Poor driven to Nakedness, Hunger, Cold, and other Inconveniences.

F

It

(1) *Mores Utopia*, lib. 1.

It appears also from the Preface to (1) *Coverdale's Bible*, published just before the Dissolution of Monasteries, that notwithstanding the Laws then in Being, the State of the Poor called aloud for further Redress.

Thus having shewn, that there was an Abundance of Poor before the Reformation, and they not sufficiently provided for by Law, nor wholly maintained by the Monasteries; let us in the next Place see what Care was taken of them after the Dissolution of those Religious Houses, and how little Reason there is to reflect upon the Reformation for neglecting them.

Now, to the Exclusion of all just Reproach, the Poor was well taken Care of, and whatever Part of their Sustenance might have been lost by the Dissolution of Monasteries, this was immediately and adequately supplied by the State, as is sufficiently attested by the different (2) Acts of *Henry VIII.* And this Aid and Assistance of the State, the
Poor,

(1) See Lewis's History of the Translation of the Bible p. 101.

(2) 27 Hen. VIII. c. 25. 27 Hen. VIII. c. 28. sec. 9. 33d Hen. VIII. c. 17. 37. Hen. VIII. c. 23.

Poor, increafing with an increafing People, might have wanted, had Monafteries remained.

After the Reign of K. *Henry VIII.* to the Time of Queen *Eliz.* all proper Care was taken of the Poor, tho' it has been fupposed that during that Interval they were much neglected.

The 1st of Ed. VI. c. 14, § 12, appoints Commiffioners of Charity Lands to employ them for the Poor.

The 3 and 4 of Edw. VI. c. 16. revives the Statute of 22 Hen. VIII. c. 12, and appoints how impotent and aged Persons fhall be relieved, and Vagabonds punifhed ; that common Labourers in Hufbandry, who do loiter and be idle when they have reasonable Wages offered them, fhall be punifhed as Vagabonds. Maimed, fore, aged, and impotent Persons, fhall be relieved and cured, and Habitations provided for them, by the Devotion of good People of that City, Town, or Village, where they were born, or have dwelt three Years.

The 2 and 3 of P. and M. c. 5, orders that the Statute of 22 H. VIII. c. 12, and the 3 and 4 Edw. VI. c. 16, concerning Beggars, Vagabonds, and idle Persons, shall be put in Execution, and further provides a Remedy where a Parish is not able to relieve the Poor therein, and where a Town surcharged with Poor, standeth in or near two Counties.

And these Laws were thought so equitable and salutary to the Commonwealth, and the Poor therein, that they were revived by 5 *Eliz.* c. 3, with this additional Force, that, if any Parishioner shall obstinately refuse to pay reasonably towards the Relief of the Poor, or shall discourage others, then the Justices of the Peace at the Quarter Sessions may tax him to a reasonable weekly Sum, which, if he refuses to pay, they may commit him to Prison.

In Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign it was, that Overseers in Parishes were first instituted, who were to be substantial Persons, having Competency of Wealth, Wisdom, and good Conscience.

The

The Laws which the English Government enacted, for each respective Parish to take Care of their own Poor, are founded upon this equitable Reason, that those who enjoyed the Benefit of their Labour, in their Youth and Health, ought to supply them in the Time of Sickneſs, Want, or Old Age.

If beſides the Proviſion of the Law, we conſider the many Hospitals we have for the ſick and lame Poor, we may with great Juſtice be ſaid to excel all the Countries upon Earth in Acts of Charity and Humanity.

We ſhould not forget to notice here, amongſt other Works of Charity, the Houſes of Correction, and the Penal Laws, made after the manner of the oldeſt and beſt States, to correct the Abandoned and Diſſolute, to make the Idle Work, and endeavour to maintain themſelves and Families, and thereby render themſelves worthy of the Proviſion and Protection they obtain from the Common-Wealth under which they live

With Regard to our Weights and Measures, it is ordained by *Magna Charta*, that there ſhall be but one Standard of both
through-

throughout the Kingdom. Eighth of *Edgar* Appoints one Mynet, or Weight, and one Measure (that of Winchester) for all England.

Many good and benevolent Laws likewise were early made to prevent Dearth, and such Frauds and Oppressions that might Occasion them ; and as many royal and noble British Examples have appeared in calamitous Times for the Public Good, equal to the Emperors and Magistrates of Rome in the like Circumstances.

(1) In the Eighth Year of *Edward II.* 1314, the Price of Victuals being so excessive, that the common People were not able to live ; By Parliament at London, 3d *Feb.* it was Ordained, and the King's Writs were published, to lower the Prices thereof, for the Relief of the poorer Sort.

In

(1) The three following Instances are taken from a very useful and valuable Book, entitled *Artachos*, where the Reader may meet with many more, and other important Articles and Orders, relating to the Assize of Bread, Weights and Measures, &c. This Book was published by Order of the most Hon. Privy Council, in the Year 1638, and re-printed in the Year 1748.

In the 15 R. II. A. D. 1391. a Dearth of Corn continued almost for two Years, whereby it came to pass, that when the Time of Fruits, as Nuts, Apples, Plumbs, Pears, &c, was come, many poor People thro' over Feeding thereof died of the Flux : and if the commendable Care of *Adam Baume*, then Mayor of *London*, had not continually provided, to the Relief of the Commons, that from the Parts beyond the Seas, Corn should be brought to *London* for the Benefit of the whole Realm, without Doubt neither had the Country sufficed the City, nor the City succoured the Country.

To the Furtherance of which good Work in relieving the Poor, the Mayor and Citizens of *London*, took out of the Orphans Chest in their Guildhall, 2000 Marks, to buy Corn and other Victuals from beyond the Seas, and the Aldermen each of them laid out 20 *l.* to the like Purpose of buying Corn, which was bestowed in divers Places, where the Poor might buy at an appointed Price, and such as had not Money to pay down, did put in Surety to pay in the Year following ; in which Year, when Harvest

vest came, the Fields yielded plentiful increase, and so the Price of Corn began to decrease.

In the 29th Year of Queen *Elizabeth*, A. D. 1586, about *January*, her Majesty observing the general Dearth of Corn and other Victuals, grown partly through the unseasonableness of the Year then past, and partly through the uncharitable Greediness of Corn Masters, but especially through the unlawful and excessive transporting of Grain into Foreign Parts, by the Advice of her Privy Council published a Proclamation, and a Book of Orders to be taken by the Justices, for Relief of the Poor.

A Proclamation to the same Effect was made in the Reign of K. James I. and in the 6th year of (1) Charles I. 1630, wherein particular Directions are given for “ suppressing
“ the Abuses and Offences of Ingrossers,
“ Badgers, Broggers, Carriers, and Buyers of
“ Corn,

(1) The Book of Orders appointed to be observed (in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth, King James I. and King Charles I.) for preventing and remedying Dearth of Grain and Victuals, together with a Proclamation relating thereto, was a few Years since re-printed for T. Payne, near the Mew's Gate.

“ Corn, Mault-Makers, Brewers, Bakers,
 “ Millers, and others trading in Corn, as
 “ also for causing the Affize of Bread and
 “ Beer to be truly kept, and the Markets
 “ duly supplied with Corn, and the *Poor*
 “ first served and provided for, with other
 “ like Clauses to the good Purpose afore-
 “ said.” In the said Proclamation his Ma-
 jesty recommends to his Subjects in their pri-
 vate Families, during the Time of Scarcity,
 “ Abstinence, and sober and moderate Diet ;
 “ and out of what is saved thereby, charit-
 “ ably and bountifully employ some good
 “ Proportion towards the Relief of those
 “ that shall be in Penury and Want, and
 “ would be glad to be refreshed with the
 “ meanest of that Food, which is super-
 “ fluously spent in rich Men’s Houses.”

But to descend still nearer to our own
 Times, Queen *Ann*, amidst the Height of
 her Wars and Success Abroad, did not for-
 get the Distresses of her People by Dearth
 at Home, as appears by her Speech
 of *November 5, 1709*, to the Lords and
 Commons.

Upon which was made the famous Act, with the Table of the Aſize of Bread, afterwards explained and amended *pro re nata*, in the Reigns of George I. and II.

In his preſent Moſt Gracious MAJESTY'S Reign, great Care has been taken, great Endeavours uſed to ſecure to us the Bleſſings of Plenty and Peace : And from his MAJESTY'S known Benevolence of Heart, we cannot but ſuppoſe it is his earneſt Wiſh and Deſire that his People ſhould be ſpeedily and effectually relieved under their preſent Sufferings, ariſing from the exorbitant Prices of the neceſſary Proviſions of Life ; nor can we imagine that his Parliament will be inattentive to a Cauſe that ſo nearly concerns themſelves, and the Community in general.

Indeed it behoves every One to lend a helping Hand in the preſent Exigencies. In Faſt, the Poor are not the only Sufferers, but many who by Law are obliged to contribute to their Support.—People of moderate Fortune, who have already made the few Retrenchments they could, are now almoſt as much diſtreſſed. The inferior Clergy, the honeſt and induſtrious Manufacturers and Ar-

Artificers, in short all Housekeepers of small Incomes begin to feel very sensibly the extraordinary Dearness of all household Provisions, though perhaps, through Modesty, they do not so much complain.

Funds and Contributions for the Relief of the indigent Members of Society are frequent and large amongst us, which are a seasonable and comfortable Support to those who partake of them, and a very great Honour to the worthy Benefactors. But these are *local* or *temporary* Reliefs, and may therefore be inadequate Remedies for the present *general* Distress, or Preventives of it for the Time to come.

It is not here intended to explore the Causes, or the Remedies of these Evils. Facts only are meant to be represented, with the Hope that such Representation may evince the Expediency of a further Attention to this Subject, or happily suggest some Hints that may be conducive to the *Public Good*.

The general Appearance of Want and Misery, which strikes the Observation in almost every Shape amidst the lower Classes of Life,
to

to which the Heart *cannot* and *should not* be indifferent, will at the same Time apologize for the Substance of this Tract, and it is wish'd incline those who have more Influence and Ability to endeavour in their respective Provinces to remove these Calamities. The Welfare of Individuals in every Society, which is inseparably connected with the Prosperity and Happiness of the Whole, cannot be unworthy to engage the most minute Attention, and the warmest Zeal of its Guardians and Friends.

CONCLUSION.

Since this short *Account* was sent to the Press, a very pleasing Assurance has been given in the *Votes of the House of Commons*, that the *high Price of Provisions* will be taken into immediate Consideration.—May the Goodness, Care, the Wisdom and the Power of the LEGISLATURE be successfully exerted upon this urgent Occasion!—May Heaven so direct and prosper all their Consultations, that *Peace* and *Happiness* in CHURCH and STATE may be Established among us for all Generations!

F I N I S.

